

SARAH ANN BIXLER

Eastern Mennonite University | 1200 Park Road | Harrisonburg, VA 22802 | 540-432-4264
sarah.bixler@emu.edu | emu.edu/faculty-staff/?show=gehman

Ordained for teaching ministry by the Virginia Mennonite Conference of Mennonite Church USA

EDUCATION

Princeton Theological Seminary Princeton, NJ

Doctor of Philosophy in Practical Theology | May 2021

- Specialization in Christian education and formation
- Certificate in digital pedagogy
- Dissertation title: Networks of Belonging: Envisioning Adolescent Attachment in Congregations, published in ProQuest UMI Dissertation database
- Dissertation committee: Dr. Kenda Creasy Dean (chair), Dr. Bo Karen Lee, Dr. Sonia Waters; External reader: Dr. Daniel Siegel

Princeton Theological Seminary Princeton, NJ

Master of Divinity | May 2016 | GPA: 3.974

- Emphasis on education and formation
- Church planting and revitalization cohort

Eastern Mennonite University Harrisonburg, VA

Bachelor of Arts | April 2002 | *Magna cum laude*

- Majors: English, Secondary Education
- Minors: Mathematics, Music

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

- Faith development and meaning-making throughout the life course
- Attachment theory and belonging
- Human and spiritual formation
- Anabaptist practical theology
- Pedagogical practice

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

FACULTY APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Professor of Formation and Practical Theology; Associate Dean of the Seminary |

Fall 2019 – present

- Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, VA
- Courses taught: Formation in God’s Story I and II, Formation in Ministry I and II, Formation in Missional Leadership I and II, Introduction to Youth Ministry, Pastoral Care, Seminar in Youth Ministry, Teaching for Christian Community, Theological Reflections on Trauma

Graduate Instructor for Teaching for Christian Community (3 credits, hybrid) | Spring 2020

- Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ

Adjunct Instructor for Introduction to Christian Education (3 credits, hybrid) | Spring 2019

- New Brunswick Theological Seminary, New Brunswick, NJ

ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION AND SERVICE

Referee | 2024-present

- Journal of Practical Theology, International Academy of Practical Theology

Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies Thesis Committee | 2024

- Paula Holtzinger, “Being and Becoming a Settled White Settler: An Autoethnography on Healing Historical Harms, White Saviorism, and White Shame,” Eastern Mennonite University

Editorial Committee | 2023-present

- Studies in Missional Hermeneutics, Theology, and Praxis series, Cascade Books

GAINS Board of Directors | 2023-present

- Global Association for Interpersonal Neurobiology Studies, Santa Monica, CA

Science-Engaged Theology Mentor | 2023-25

- Psychology Cross-training Fellowship Programme for Theologians, University of Birmingham, UK

Anabaptist Course Collaborative contributor from Eastern Mennonite University | 2022-24

- Mennonite Higher Education Association (by EMU presidential appointment)

Center for Justice and Peacebuilding Visioning Team | 2024

- Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA

Doctorate Committee | 2023

- David Johnston (Keas) Keasler, “Becoming the Hermeneutic of the Gospel: Dallas Willard's Formational Theology and the Missional Church,” Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Student Human Formation Study & Resource Group | 2022

- The Association of Theological Schools, Pittsburgh, PA

Sarah Ann Bixler

Steering Committee | 2020-present

- Religious Reflections on Friendship unit, American Academy of Religion

Start-up Program Coordinator | 2019

- Iron Sharpening Iron: Leadership Education for Women Clergy, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ

Assistant to the Director, Dr. Darrell L. Guder | 2016-19

- Center for Church Planting and Revitalization, Princeton Theological Seminary

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

[forthcoming] *Happiness without Belonging: The Paradox of Adolescent Attachment in American Religion*. AAR Academy Series, ed. Margaret Kamitsuka. New York: Oxford University Press. *Proposal approved by publisher, manuscript under development with series editor for submission in 2024-25.*

[forthcoming] “Speak Softly and Carry a Pencil: Glimpses of Walking Worthily.” In forthcoming book of essays honoring Darrell L. Guder, ed. Ross A. Lockhart. *invited*

“Religion Has No Bo(u)nds? Expanding the Dimensions of Religion to the Attachment of Spiritual Friendship.” In *Multireligious Reflections on Friendship: Becoming Ourselves in Community*, ed. Anne-Marie Ellithorpe, Laura Duhan-Kaplan and Hussam S. Timani. Religion and Borders series, ed. Alexander Y. Hwang. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2023, 209-25.

[Editor] *Collected Essays of Richard R. Osmer*. Seattle, WA: Kindle Direct Publishing, 2022.

“The Self Unveiled: The Dis-integration of Mennonite Women’s Head Coverings.” In *Resistance: Confronting Violence, Power, and Abuse within Peace Churches*, ed. Cameron Altaras and Carol Penner. Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2022: 221-37. *invited*

“Mission and Formation” issue, *Anabaptist Witness* 9, No. 1 (April 2022). Guest co-editor with Hyung Jin “Pablo” Kim Sun.

“Mission as Distraction? A Critical Twist on Formation and Mission in Anabaptist Communities on the Möbius Loop.” *Anabaptist Witness* 9, No. 1 (April 2022): 37-56. *peer-reviewed*

“Anabaptist Mennonites in North America, 1683-2021.” Database of Religious History, Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia. February 7, 2021.
<https://religiondatabase.org/browse/968/> *invited*

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“Searching for Self: Community as a Conduit for God’s Deepest Transformation,” in *Education with the Grain of the Universe: A Nonviolent Program for the Future of Mennonite Schools, Colleges, and Universities*, ed. J. Denny Weaver. Telford, PA: Cascadia, 2017: 194-207. *invited*

“Reframing the Self(ie).” *Journal of Youth and Theology* 16, No. 1 (2017): 25-45. *peer-reviewed*

“The Violent Shadow: Considering John Howard Yoder’s Sexual Misconduct from a Jungian Psychological Perspective.” *Princeton Theological Review* 19, No. 1 (Spring 2016): 5-19.

GRANTS RECEIVED

Regional Development Grant | February 2024

- \$3000, American Academy of Religion

Christian Parenting and Caregiving Grant for the *Conectere* Project at Eastern Mennonite University (Project Director, Co-Principal Investigator with Almeda Wright, and collaborating with Greg Czyszczon) | June 2023

- \$1,248,874, Lilly Endowment Inc., Indianapolis, IN

External Resource Matching Grant for Eastern Mennonite Seminary | July 2022

- \$15,000, In Trust Center for Theological Schools, Wilmington, DE

Wabash Consulting Grant for Eastern Mennonite University | July 2022

- Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion, Crawfordsville, IN

Pathways for Tomorrow Phase 2 Grant for the Penuel Project at Eastern Mennonite Seminary | June 2022 (primary writer)

- \$998,606, Lilly Endowment Inc., Indianapolis, IN

Research Grant in Anabaptist-Mennonite Studies | July 2020

- \$1000, Mennonite Historical Society, Goshen, IN

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Academy of Religion
Anabaptist-Mennonite Scholars Network
Association of Practical Theology

Global Association for Interpersonal Neurobiology Studies
International Academy of Practical Theology
International Association for the Study of Youth Ministry
Mennonite Historical Society

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS (selected)

Hybrid Pedagogy to Build Student Connection | May 14, 2024

- Mennonite Higher Education Conference, Harrisonburg, VA

Respondent to *Missional Peacemaking: Engaging Polarization in Ecclesial and Educational Contexts* | November 18, 2023

- The Forum on Missional Hermeneutics, Society of Biblical Literature, San Antonio, TX

Womanist Theologies that Bring Integrity to My Anabaptism | June 16, 2023

- Global Mennonite Peacebuilding Conference III, Harrisonburg, VA

Friendliness without Belonging? The Paradox of Youth Attachment in American Religion | June 8, 2023

- International Academy of Practical Theology, Seoul, South Korea

Friends in Crisis: Rediscovering Early Anabaptist Leaders within a Catholic Friendship Tradition | Nov. 21, 2022

- American Academy of Religion, Denver, CO

Conversion as Bonding: Adolescent Attachment to God and Community in Anabaptist Perspective | Nov. 20, 2022

- American Academy of Religion, Denver, CO

Networks of Belonging: Adolescent Attachment in Congregations | July 13, 2022

- International Association for the Study of Youth Ministry, Atlanta, GA

Investigating Adolescent Attachment in Congregations | April 2, 2022

- Association of Practical Theology, online

Networked Bonds: An Attachment-Informed Vision for Spiritual Friendship | Nov. 22, 2021

- American Academy of Religion, San Antonio, TX

Reimagining Youth Ministry through an Attachment Ecclesiology | April 21, 2021

- Institute for Youth Ministry Research Gathering, Princeton Theological Seminary

“Musing on Cicero’s Thoughts”: Methodology in Aelred of Rievaulx’s Practical Theology of Spiritual Friendship | December 10, 2020

- American Academy of Religion (virtual)

Adolescent Experiences of Relational Belonging in Mennonite Congregations | Fall 2020

- Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and the Religious Research Association (accepted for presentation at 2020 annual meeting that was canceled due to COVID-19)

Attachment and Spiritual Friendship: An Interdisciplinary Exploration | November 25, 2019

- American Academy of Religion, San Diego, CA

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Congregation as Safe Haven and Secure Base? Youth Ministry from An Attachment Perspective |
January 3, 2019

- International Association for the Study of Youth Ministry, Durham, UK

*Attachment to Religious Group: A New Interdisciplinary Conception of Adolescents in
Congregations* | August 12, 2018

- Association for the Sociology of Religion, Philadelphia, PA

MINISTRY AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE (non-academic)

Associate Residence Director | 2012-13

Eastern Mennonite University

Harrisonburg, VA

- Overseer of a 75-student residence hall

Conference Coordinator | 2011-13

Virginia Mennonite Conference

Harrisonburg, VA

- Executive-level administrator and CFO of middle adjudicatory with 70 congregations

Curriculum Writer | 2008-10

Brethren Press

Elgin, IL

- Writer of interdenominational Sunday school curriculum for grades 6-12

Youth Minister | 2001-09

Zion Mennonite Church

Broadway, VA

- Minister with 40 youth annually in grades 6-12, congregational ministry staff member

Interim Conference Youth Minister | 2006-07

Virginia Mennonite Conference

Harrisonburg, VA

- Director of conference-wide youth retreats and resource provider for youth leaders

Classroom Teacher | 2002-07

Eastern Mennonite School

Harrisonburg, VA

- Teacher of grade 6 language arts, U.S. history and Bible; and grade 7 pre-algebra

GRADUATE HONORS AND SCHOLARSHIPS (selected)

Princeton Theological Seminary Doctoral Fellowship and Ph.D. Merit Tuition Scholarship | 2016-21

- Fully funded program with tuition and stipend for 5 years, awarded to 10 students annually

Louisville Institute Doctoral Fellowship | 2017-19

- Two-year fellowship awarded annually to 10 doctoral students showing promise for teaching and scholarship in theological education

Virtue, Happiness and Self-Transcendence summer session participant | 2017

- University of Chicago: Virtue, Happiness and the Meaning of Life project, funded by the John Templeton Foundation (by application)

Arthur Paul Rech Memorial Award in Theology and Pastoral Ministry | 2016

- Awarded annually to one Princeton Seminary senior demonstrating academic excellence in practical theology and a personal commitment to the practice of ministry in the church

William Tennent Scholarship | 2015

- Awarded annually to one rising senior at Princeton Seminary showing special interest and ability in the teaching aspects of the work of the church

Marguerite Young Endowment Fund Scholarship | 2015

- Scholarship for select Master of Divinity students, granted by the Pittsburgh Foundation

Calvary Foundation Scholarship | 2013-15

- Awarded annually to select students whose education supports the living out of their Christian faith, granted by Calvary United Methodist Foundation, Arlington, VA